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**Cryptography Correctness Detection Methods and  
Apparatuses**

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# Cryptography Correctness Detection Methods and Apparatuses

## TECHNICAL FIELD

The present invention relates generally to computers and like devices, and more particularly to methods and apparatuses that for detecting if cryptography information/services meet certain acceptable conditions from the security point of view for use by computing processes.

## BACKGROUND

Cryptography services are typically provided in computing systems to support various security needs. These cryptography services employ different cryptography techniques and algorithms as needed to perform certain actions.

Cryptography techniques may be categorized as either symmetric cryptography or asymmetric cryptography. With symmetric cryptography, the same secret key is used for both encryption and decryption. This means that the symmetric key needs to be shared between the encrypting party and the decrypting party. Any party having a copy of the symmetric key may therefore decrypt and read a message. Hence, there is a need to protect and maintain control over the symmetric key. Security is provided through the protection of the key being used by the sender and the receiver. As long as only the sender and receiver know the secret symmetric key value, the message is protected (assuming a robust encryption algorithm and a cryptographically safe key size/seed are used).

Asymmetric cryptography (public key cryptography) is typically based on a "key pair". Here, one key in the pair is referred to as the "public" key. As the

1 name implies, a public key may be shared with others and even published in a  
2 public directory, for example. The other key is referred to as the "private" key.  
3 Also consistent with its name, the private key is meant to be kept secret and secure  
4 by the party. Although the two keys are mathematically related, the private key  
5 cannot be determined from the public key, or at least doing so would likely be  
6 computationally infeasible.

7       Encryption and signing are two typical operations associated with public  
8 key cryptography. Data that is encrypted using a public key can only be decrypted  
9 using the associated private key and vice versa. Signing allows one to verify the  
10 source of a piece of data. Signing does not, however, protect the data from being  
11 viewed by anyone who has access to the sender's public key. In asymmetric  
12 cryptography, security is provided through the protection of the private keys.

13       Asymmetric cryptography is also often employed to provide authentication,  
14 non-repudiation and data integrity security mechanisms. Authentication provides  
15 assurance that a message was actually sent by the party indicated. Non-  
16 repudiation provides assurance that a sender cannot later deny having sent certain  
17 data. Data Integrity provides assurance that a message was not modified prior to  
18 reaching its destination.

19       These security mechanisms are typically provided by using a hash function  
20 in conjunction with public key cryptography. A hash function is basically an  
21 encoding scheme that is quick to compute and results in a relatively short numeric  
22 representation of the message that was hashed. Hash functions can be used to  
23 provide data integrity. First, a hash function is a one-way function, which means  
24 that one cannot retrieve the message from the resulting hash value. Second, the  
25

1 slightest change to the original message will result in a clearly detectable change  
2 of the hash value.

3         Some processes use a hash function in conjunction with public key  
4 cryptography to provide a security service often referred to as “signing” that  
5 ensures authentication and non-repudiation. For example, in certain systems,  
6 when a user signs a message, a hash of the message is calculated and then  
7 encrypted using the sender's private key. The resulting encrypted hash is referred  
8 to as the “digital signature”. The original plaintext message, the digital signature,  
9 and the sender's certificate which contains the sender's public signing key are then  
10 sent to the recipient. Once received, the digital signature is decrypted using the  
11 sender's public key that was sent along with the message in the form of a  
12 certificate. The receiving client also generates a hash value for the plaintext  
13 message using the same hash function as did the sender. After the signature of the  
14 sender is decrypted with the sender's public key and the hash value recovered, the  
15 recovered hash value can then be compared with the generated hash value to  
16 detect differences. If the two hash values match, then the message must have  
17 originated from the sender who possesses the private key. Hence, this provides  
18 authentication and non-repudiation. Furthermore, since this technique reliably  
19 detects if the message was changed/tampered during transit, data integrity is  
20 provided.

21         Cryptography services such as these and others are often handled  
22 “automatically” by the processes running on computing devices. This means,  
23 however, that such processes and/or users are sometimes not aware of the type of  
24 algorithm/key being used, nor if such algorithms/keys may be less secure than  
25 others that are available for use.

1           Consequently, for such reasons and others, there is a need for methods and  
2           apparatuses that can inform certain processes and/or even the user about the  
3           relative strength/weakness of cryptography services being used.

#### 4 5           SUMMARY

6           Methods and apparatuses are provided that can inform certain processes  
7           and/or even the user about the relative strength/weakness of cryptography services  
8           being used.

9           The above stated needs and/or others are met, for example, by a method  
10          that includes establishing at least one cryptography service parameter threshold,  
11          selectively detecting a request for at least one cryptography service, and  
12          selectively performing at least one correctness detection action based on the  
13          requested cryptography service and the cryptography service parameter threshold.

14          The cryptography service parameter threshold may identify  
15          acceptable/unacceptable cryptography algorithms, acceptable/unacceptable  
16          cryptography key size parameters, acceptable/unacceptable cryptography seed size  
17          parameters, and other like parameters with which requested cryptography service  
18          information can be compared.

19          Algorithms, for example, may be categorized as being certified, old/out-of-  
20          date, weak, strong, etc. Key/seed lengths may also be compared to threshold  
21          lengths that are considered either weak or strong.

22          In certain implementations the method may also include performing  
23          actions, such as, for example, interrupting the application process, stopping the  
24          application process, starting at least one process to do further actions, displaying  
25          alert information, logging alert information, suggesting at least one alternative

1 cryptography service, outputting alert messages, causing alteration of a graphical  
2 user interface, forcing use of at least one other cryptography service, etc., if the  
3 requested cryptography service is deemed to be “too weak”.  
4

## 5 **BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS**

6 A more complete understanding of the various methods and apparatuses of  
7 the present invention may be had by reference to the following detailed description  
8 when taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings wherein:

9 Fig. 1 is a block diagram that depicts a computer system configurable to  
10 provide cryptography services and cryptography correctness detection logic.

11 Fig. 2 is a block diagram depicting an example of certain computing  
12 processes including exemplary cryptography correctness detection logic and  
13 cryptography algorithm logic, for use in a computing device, for example, as  
14 depicted in Fig. 1.

15 Fig. 3 is a flow diagram depicting certain exemplary acts associated with an  
16 exemplary method for use in cryptography correctness detection logic, for  
17 example, as in Fig. 2.

18 Fig. 4 is a flow diagram depicting certain exemplary acts associated with an  
19 exemplary method for use in cryptography correctness detection logic when  
20 asymmetric key encryption is requested.

21 Fig. 5 is a flow diagram depicting certain exemplary acts associated with an  
22 exemplary method for use in cryptography correctness detection logic when  
23 symmetric key encryption is requested.  
24  
25

1        Fig. 6 is a flow diagram depicting certain exemplary acts associated with an  
2 exemplary method for use in cryptography correctness detection logic when  
3 asymmetric key decryption is requested.

4        Fig. 7 is a flow diagram depicting certain exemplary acts associated with an  
5 exemplary method for use in cryptography correctness detection logic when  
6 symmetric key decryption is requested.

7        Fig. 8 is a flow diagram depicting certain exemplary acts associated with an  
8 exemplary method for use in cryptography correctness detection logic when a new  
9 key is derived.

10       Fig. 9 is a flow diagram depicting certain exemplary acts associated with an  
11 exemplary method for use in cryptography correctness detection logic when a key  
12 is imported or exported.

### 13 14 **DETAILED DESCRIPTION**

15       Turning to the drawings, wherein like reference numerals refer to like  
16 elements, the invention is illustrated as being implemented in a suitable computing  
17 environment. Although not required, the invention will be described in the general  
18 context of computer-executable instructions, such as program modules, being  
19 executed by a personal computer. Generally, program modules include routines,  
20 programs, objects, components, data structures, etc. that perform particular tasks  
21 or implement particular abstract data types. Moreover, those skilled in the art will  
22 appreciate that the invention may be practiced with other computer system  
23 configurations, including hand-held devices, multi-processor systems,  
24 microprocessor based or programmable consumer electronics, network PCs,  
25 minicomputers, mainframe computers, and the like. The invention may also be

1 practiced in distributed computing environments where tasks are performed by  
2 remote processing devices that are linked through a communications network. In  
3 a distributed computing environment, program modules may be located in both  
4 local and remote memory storage devices.

5 Fig.1 illustrates an example of a suitable computing environment 120 with  
6 which the subsequently described methods and apparatuses may be implemented.

7 Exemplary computing environment 120 is only one example of a suitable  
8 computing environment and is not intended to suggest any limitation as to the  
9 scope of use or functionality of the improved methods and apparatuses described  
10 herein. Neither should computing environment 120 be interpreted as having any  
11 dependency or requirement relating to any one or combination of components  
12 illustrated in computing environment 120.

13 The improved methods and apparatuses herein are operational with  
14 numerous other general purpose or special purpose computing system  
15 environments or configurations. Examples of well known computing systems,  
16 environments, and/or configurations that may be suitable include, but are not  
17 limited to, personal computers, server computers, thin clients, thick clients, hand-  
18 held or laptop devices, multiprocessor systems, microprocessor-based systems, set  
19 top boxes, programmable consumer electronics, network PCs, minicomputers,  
20 mainframe computers, distributed computing environments that include any of the  
21 above systems or devices, and the like.

22 As shown in Fig. 1, computing environment 120 includes a general-purpose  
23 computing device in the form of a computer 130. The components of computer  
24 130 may include one or more processors or processing units 132, a system  
25



1 memory 134, and a bus 136 that couples various system components including  
2 system memory 134 to processor 132.

3 Bus 136 represents one or more of any of several types of bus structures,  
4 including a memory bus or memory controller, a peripheral bus, an accelerated  
5 graphics port, and a processor or local bus using any of a variety of bus  
6 architectures. By way of example, and not limitation, such architectures include  
7 Industry Standard Architecture (ISA) bus, Micro Channel Architecture (MCA)  
8 bus, Enhanced ISA (EISA) bus, Video Electronics Standards Association (VESA)  
9 local bus, and Peripheral Component Interconnects (PCI) bus also known as  
10 Mezzanine bus.

11 Computer 130 typically includes a variety of computer readable media.  
12 Such media may be any available media that is accessible by computer 130, and it  
13 includes both volatile and non-volatile media, removable and non-removable  
14 media.

15 In Fig. 1, system memory 134 includes computer readable media in the  
16 form of volatile memory, such as random access memory (RAM) 140, and/or non-  
17 volatile memory, such as read only memory (ROM) 138. A basic input/output  
18 system (BIOS) 142, containing the basic routines that help to transfer information  
19 between elements within computer 130, such as during start-up, is stored in ROM  
20 138. RAM 140 typically contains data and/or program modules that are  
21 immediately accessible to and/or presently being operated on by processor 132.

22 Computer 130 may further include other removable/non-removable,  
23 volatile/non-volatile computer storage media. For example, Fig. 1 illustrates a  
24 hard disk drive 144 for reading from and writing to a non-removable, non-volatile  
25 magnetic media (not shown and typically called a "hard drive"), a magnetic disk

1 drive 146 for reading from and writing to a removable, non-volatile magnetic disk  
2 148 (e.g., a “floppy disk”), and an optical disk drive 150 for reading from or  
3 writing to a removable, non-volatile optical disk 152 such as a CD-ROM, CD-R,  
4 CD-RW, DVD-ROM, DVD-RAM or other optical media. Hard disk drive 144,  
5 magnetic disk drive 146 and optical disk drive 150 are each connected to bus 136  
6 by one or more interfaces 154.

7 The drives and associated computer-readable media provide nonvolatile  
8 storage of computer readable instructions, data structures, program modules, and  
9 other data for computer 130. Although the exemplary environment described  
10 herein employs a hard disk, a removable magnetic disk 148 and a removable  
11 optical disk 152, it should be appreciated by those skilled in the art that other types  
12 of computer readable media which can store data that is accessible by a computer,  
13 such as magnetic cassettes, flash memory cards, digital video disks, random access  
14 memories (RAMs), read only memories (ROM), and the like, may also be used in  
15 the exemplary operating environment.

16 A number of program modules may be stored on the hard disk, magnetic  
17 disk 148, optical disk 152, ROM 138, or RAM 140, including, e.g., an operating  
18 system 158, one or more application programs 160, other program modules 162,  
19 and program data 164.

20 The improved methods and apparatuses described herein may be  
21 implemented within operating system 158, one or more application programs 160,  
22 other program modules 162, and/or program data 164.

23 A user may provide commands and information into computer 130 through  
24 input devices such as keyboard 166 and pointing device 168 (such as a “mouse”).  
25 Other input devices (not shown) may include a microphone, joystick, game pad,

1 satellite dish, serial port, scanner, camera, etc. These and other input devices are  
2 connected to the processing unit 132 through a user input interface 170 that is  
3 coupled to bus 136, but may be connected by other interface and bus structures,  
4 such as a parallel port, game port, or a universal serial bus (USB).

5 A monitor 172 or other type of display device is also connected to bus 136  
6 via an interface, such as a video adapter 174. In addition to monitor 172, personal  
7 computers typically include other peripheral output devices (not shown), such as  
8 speakers and printers, which may be connected through output peripheral interface  
9 175.

10 Computer 130 may operate in a networked environment using logical  
11 connections to one or more remote computers, such as a remote computer 182.  
12 Remote computer 182 may include many or all of the elements and features  
13 described herein relative to computer 130.

14 Logical connections shown in Fig. 1 are a local area network (LAN) 177  
15 and a general wide area network (WAN) 179. Such networking environments are  
16 commonplace in offices, enterprise-wide computer networks, intranets, and the  
17 Internet.

18 When used in a LAN networking environment, computer 130 is connected  
19 to LAN 177 via network interface or adapter 186. When used in a WAN  
20 networking environment, the computer typically includes a modem 178 or other  
21 means for establishing communications over WAN 179. Modem 178, which may  
22 be internal or external, may be connected to system bus 136 via the user input  
23 interface 170 or other appropriate mechanism.

1 Depicted in Fig. 1, is a specific implementation of a WAN via the Internet.  
2 Here, computer 130 employs modem 178 to establish communications with at  
3 least one remote computer 182 via the Internet 180.

4 In a networked environment, program modules depicted relative to  
5 computer 130, or portions thereof, may be stored in a remote memory storage  
6 device. Thus, e.g., as depicted in Fig. 1, remote application programs 189 may  
7 reside on a memory device of remote computer 182. It will be appreciated that the  
8 network connections shown and described are exemplary and other means of  
9 establishing a communications link between the computers may be used.

10 Attention is now drawn to Fig. 2, which is a block diagram illustratively  
11 depicting certain computer-implementable processes 200 that are configured to  
12 operate together in a manner such that cryptographic services can be requested by  
13 certain processes and provided by other processes to the requesting process  
14 accordingly. The cryptographic services may include, for example, encryption  
15 services, decryption services, key generation services, key exchange services,  
16 digital signature services, etc. Typically, cryptographic services are requested or  
17 otherwise initiated by processes, such as applications, and the actual cryptography  
18 services performed by one or more other cryptography algorithm processes. The  
19 applications usually interact with the operating system through the application  
20 programming interfaces (API) to initiate the cryptography services.

21 Thus, for example, as depicted in Fig. 2 an operating system 202 contains  
22 interfaces (APIs) between an application 208 and cryptography algorithm logic  
23 206. Included in operating system 202 is cryptography correctness detection logic  
24 204. While illustrated in this example as being part of the operating system, in  
25 other implementations cryptography correctness detection logic 204 may be a

1 process that is separate from operating system 202 but operatively coupled to  
2 operating system 202 to perform functions/acts accordingly.

3 Attention is now drawn to Fig. 3, which is a flow diagram showing a  
4 method 300 that cryptography correctness detection logic 204 in the example in  
5 Fig. 2 can be configured to perform.

6 In act 302, which is optional, cryptography correctness parameter(s) and/or  
7 other like information are updated and maintained. This may include an initial  
8 establishment of the cryptography correctness parameter(s) and/or other like  
9 information, or the periodic or otherwise selective updating of cryptography  
10 correctness parameter(s) and/or other like information. As a result of act 302,  
11 cryptography correctness parameter(s) and/or other like information is configured  
12 and stored, for example, in a computer's memory. These cryptography correctness  
13 parameters may be configured according to the security requirements for the  
14 application and may change in time according to the computational power available  
15 and advances made in cryptanalysis.

16 In act 304, the current relative "strength" for each available cryptography  
17 algorithm logic 206 is established. Here, for example, the cryptography  
18 correctness parameter(s) and/or other like information as provided in act 302 may  
19 include one or more cryptography service parameter thresholds. Such parameter  
20 thresholds can identify acceptable ("strong" enough) and/or unacceptable (too  
21 "weak") cryptography algorithms, or acceptable/unacceptable cryptography key  
22 size parameters. Cryptography algorithms can be specified using algorithm  
23 identifiers, version numbers, etc., and cryptography key size parameters can be  
24 identified by specifying acceptable/unacceptable bit lengths, for example.

1 In certain implementations, as part of acts 302/304, the cryptography  
2 service parameter threshold(s) are further associated with correctness categories.  
3 These correctness categories can, for example be employed to define the different  
4 algorithm identifiers, key lengths, etc., as being “old”/outdated algorithms,  
5 new/strong algorithms, weak keys, and strong keys.

6 The cryptography service parameter threshold may also identify  
7 acceptable/unacceptable seed type/size parameters associated with cryptography  
8 services, such as key generation.

9 In act 306, cryptography correctness detection logic 204 is configured to  
10 monitor on-going applicable processes to detect or otherwise be made aware of a  
11 request for or use of cryptography services from cryptography algorithm logic  
12 206. For example, in certain implementations application 208 alerts operating  
13 system 202 as to a need for cryptography services. Cryptography correctness  
14 detection logic 204 is made aware of this request in act 306.

15 In act 306, various processes may be monitored; for example, application  
16 processes, operating system services, managed code application processes, or  
17 other processes calling into the cryptographic application programming interfaces  
18 (API) processes, and/or the like can be monitored.

19 In act 308, cryptography correctness detection logic 204 determines if the  
20 requested cryptography service/algorithm meets the conditions established in acts  
21 302/304 via the cryptography correctness parameters/information. For example,  
22 in act 308 it can be determined if the identified cryptography algorithm is  
23 considered to be “strong” enough or too “weak” for a given process, time, user,  
24 data, etc. This may include, for example, determining a category for the  
25 algorithm/key. This may also include determining the type/length of a key to be

1 used and comparing the type/length to applicable cryptography correctness  
2 parameters/information.

3 If, in act 308, it is determined that the requested cryptography  
4 service/algorithm satisfies the applicable cryptography correctness  
5 parameters/information, then the cryptography service/algorithm continues to  
6 execute accordingly. Information may be logged by cryptography correctness  
7 detection logic regarding the monitoring activities in act 306 and/or the  
8 determination made in act 308.

9 To the contrary, if, in act 308, it is determined that the requested  
10 cryptography service/algorithm fails to satisfy the applicable cryptography  
11 correctness parameters/information, then the cryptography service/algorithm  
12 continues with act 310.

13 In act 310, one or more actions may be initiated or otherwise performed by  
14 cryptography correctness detection logic 204. By way of example, actions may  
15 include interrupting the application process, stopping the application process,  
16 starting at least one process to perform further correction/notification actions,  
17 displaying alert information, logging alert information, suggesting at least one  
18 alternative cryptography service, outputting alert messages, causing alteration of a  
19 graphical user interface, and/or forcing use of at least one other cryptography  
20 algorithm/service instead of the requested algorithm/service.

21 In this manner, cryptography correctness detection logic 204 can be  
22 configured to support or enforce specific security/policy requirements depending  
23 on the device/user/situation. Thus, in certain implementations, when a “weak”  
24 algorithm/key is detected by cryptography correctness detection logic 204, then  
25 the algorithm/key may be flagged accordingly to alert the program, user,

1 administrator, etc., about the use of a weak algorithm/key/seed, while also  
2 allowing the requested cryptography service to continue. In other stricter  
3 implementations, a requested cryptography service that is deemed to be too weak  
4 may not be continued or otherwise refused to occur. In still other examples, an  
5 implementation may actively suggest one or more different, i.e., “stronger”,  
6 algorithms/keys/seeds. Here, a user can be presented with and selectively  
7 authorize such substitution. In still other implementations, such a substitution may  
8 be made automatically or at least initiated automatically by cryptography  
9 correctness detection logic 204. Information may also be logged by cryptography  
10 correctness detection logic 204 regarding the actions initiated in act 310.

11 Figs 4-9 provide additional description for use in logic 204 and/or method  
12 300 in accordance with certain further illustrative examples.

13 Fig. 4 is a flow diagram depicting certain exemplary acts associated with an  
14 exemplary method 400 for use in cryptography correctness detection logic 204  
15 when asymmetric/public key encryption is requested. In act 402, a request for  
16 encryption services with a public key is made by application 208, for example. In  
17 act 404, it is determined if the public key is sufficiently secure enough for the  
18 present operation. For example, in act 404 the size of the public key may be  
19 compared to a minimum acceptable public key size (e.g., greater than or equal to  
20  $N$  bits, with  $N$  currently equal to 1024). In act 406, the public key is sufficiently  
21 secure and therefore control is returned to the application or other applicable  
22 process. In act 408, the public key is deemed to be not sufficiently secure and  
23 therefore action is initiated in the form of a flag weak key action. In act 410,  
24 processes continue to execute accordingly.  
25



Fig. 5 is a flow diagram depicting certain exemplary acts associated with an exemplary method 500 for use in cryptography correctness detection logic 204 when symmetric key encryption is requested. In act 502, a request for encryption services with a symmetric key is made by application 208, for example. In act 504, it is determined if the cryptography algorithm is an RC2 algorithm. In act 506, the algorithm is not the RC2 algorithm, and it is determined if the symmetric key is sufficiently secure, e.g., based on its size (length in bits) (e.g., less than  $K$  bits, with  $K$  currently equal to 128). If the symmetric key is deemed sufficiently secure, then control is returned to the application or other applicable process in act 516. If the symmetric key is deemed to not be sufficiently secure, then in act 508 action is initiated in the form of a flag weak key action and the method continues with act 516.

Retuning to act 504, if the algorithm is determined to be RC2, then in method 500 continues with act 510, in which action is initiated in the form of a flag old algorithm action. This action may include recommending a substitute algorithm. In act 512, it is determined if the effective key size is sufficiently secure, e.g., based on its size (length in bits) (e.g., less than  $M$  bits, with  $M$  currently equal to 128). If the symmetric key is deemed sufficiently secure, then control is returned to the application or other applicable process in act 516. If the symmetric key is deemed to not be sufficiently secure, then in act 514 action is initiated in the form of a flag weak key action and the method continues with act 516.

Fig. 6 is a flow diagram depicting certain exemplary acts associated with an exemplary method 600 for use in cryptography correctness detection logic 204 when asymmetric key decryption is requested. In act 602, a request for decryption

1 services with a public key is made by application 208, for example. In act 604, it  
2 is determined if the public key is sufficiently secure enough for the present  
3 operation. For example, in act 604 the size of the public key may be compared to  
4 a minimum acceptable public key size (e.g., greater than or equal to  $N$  bits, with  $N$   
5 currently equal to 1024). In act 606, the public key is sufficiently secure and  
6 therefore control is returned to the application or other applicable process. In act  
7 608, the public key is deemed to be not sufficiently secure and therefore action is  
8 initiated in the form of a flag weak key action. In act 610, processes continue to  
9 execute accordingly.

10 Fig. 7 is a flow diagram depicting certain exemplary acts associated with an  
11 exemplary method 700 for use in cryptography correctness detection logic 204  
12 when symmetric key decryption is requested. In act 702, a request for decryption  
13 services with a symmetric key is made by application 208, for example. In act  
14 704, it is determined if the cryptography algorithm is an RC2 algorithm. If the  
15 algorithm is not RC2, then method 700 continues with act 712 and processes  
16 continue to execute accordingly. If the algorithm is RC2, then method 700  
17 continues with act 706.

18 In act 706 action is initiated in the form of a flag old algorithm action. This  
19 action may include recommending a substitute algorithm. In act 708, it is  
20 determined if the effective key size is sufficiently secure, e.g., based on its size  
21 (length in bits) (e.g., less than  $M$  bits, with  $M$  currently equal to 128). If the  
22 symmetric key is deemed sufficiently secure, then control is returned to the  
23 application or other applicable process in act 712. If the symmetric key is deemed  
24 to not be sufficiently secure, then in act 710 action is initiated in the form of a flag  
25

1 weak ciphertext may have been compromised action and the method continues  
2 with act 712.

3 Fig. 8 is a flow diagram depicting certain exemplary acts associated with an  
4 exemplary method 800 for use in cryptography correctness detection logic 204  
5 when deriving a new key (e.g., based on a seed). In act 802, a request for  
6 encryption services providing a new key is made by application 208, for example.  
7 In act 804, it is determined if the initial key (or seed) from which the new key is to  
8 be derived from is sufficiently secure enough for the present operation. For  
9 example, in act 804 the size of the initial key or seed may be compared to a  
10 minimum acceptable initial key or seed size. In act 806, the initial key or seed is  
11 sufficiently secure and therefore control is returned to the application or other  
12 applicable process. In act 808, the initial key or seed is deemed to be not  
13 sufficiently secure and therefore action is initiated in the form of a flag weak key  
14 action. In act 810, processes continue to execute accordingly.

15 Fig. 9 is a flow diagram depicting certain exemplary acts associated with an  
16 exemplary method 900 for use in cryptography correctness detection logic 204  
17 when a key is imported or exported. In act 902, a request for encryption services  
18 includes importing a key. In act 904, a request for encryption services includes  
19 exporting a key.

20 In act 906, it is determined if a public key that is used for key  
21 encryption/decryption of the imported/exported key is sufficiently secure enough  
22 for the present operation. For example, in act 906 the size of the public key may  
23 be compared to a minimum acceptable public key size. If, in act 908, the public  
24 key is deemed to be sufficiently secure, then method 900 continues with act 910.  
25 If, in act 908, the public key is deemed to not be sufficiently secure, then method

1 900 continues with act 908 and action is initiated in the form of a flag weak key  
2 action because the imported/exported key may have been (or may become)  
3 exposed or otherwise more easily compromised.

4 In act 910, it is determined if an imported key is sufficiently secure enough  
5 for the present operation. For example, in act 910 the size of the imported key  
6 may be compared to a minimum acceptable importable key size. If, in act 910, the  
7 imported key is deemed to be sufficiently secure, then method 900 continues with  
8 act 914. If, in act 908, the imported key is deemed to not be sufficiently secure,  
9 then method 900 continues with act 912 and action is initiated in the form of a flag  
10 weak key action because the imported key may have been exposed or otherwise  
11 more compromised.

12 In act 914, it is determined if an imported/exported key is an RC2 key. If,  
13 in act 914 the imported/exported key is not an RC2 key, then method 900  
14 continues with act 918. If the imported/exported key is an RC2 key, then method  
15 900 continues with act 916 and action is initiated in the form of a flag key action.  
16 This action may include recommending a substitute key/algorithm. In act 918,  
17 processes continue to execute accordingly.

18 In this section some current cryptography algorithms are identified by  
19 common their request calls and/or name. Some of these algorithms, for example,  
20 are already deemed to be less secure (weak) when compared to others that are  
21 currently considered "strong". Those skilled in the art will clearly recognize that  
22 this exemplary list may be increased or decreased in size and the suggested  
23 relative strengths of the algorithms will likely need to change over time as new  
24 developments in the field of cryptography are developed.  
25

1	Algorithm internal identifier	Message displayed and recommendation
	CALG_MD2	MD2 hashing (weak algorithm)
2	CALG_MD4	MD4 Hashing (weak algorithm)
	CALG_MD5	MD5 Hashing (strong algorithm)
3	CALG_SHA1	SHA1 Hashing (strong algorithm)
4	CALG_MAC	MAC Hashing
	CALG_RSA_SIGN	RSA signing
5	CALG_DSS_SIGN	DSS signing
	CALG_NO_SIGN	CALG_NO_SIGN: No signature
6	CALG_RSA_KEYX	RSA key exchange
	CALG_DES	DES (weak encryption)
7	CALG_3DES_112	3DES-2 key encryption (strong algorithm)
8	CALG_3DES	3DES-3 key (strong algorithm)
	CALG_DESX	DESX encryption
9	CALG_RC2	RC2 (old encryption, use newer if possible)
	CALG_RC4	RC4 (strong algorithm)
10	CALG_RC5	RC5 (weak algorithm)
11	CALG_AES_128	AES_128 (strong algorithm)
	CALG_AES_192	AES_192 (strong algorithm)
12	CALG_AES_256	AES_256 (strong algorithm)
	CALG_AES	Generic AES encryption (strong algorithm)
13	CALG_SEAL	CALG_SEAL encryption
14	CALG_DH_SF	CALG_DH_SF: Diffie-Hellman (store and forward) key agreement
15	CALG_DH_EPHEM	CALG_DH_EPHEM: Diffie-Hellman (ephemeral) key agreement"},
16	CALG_AGREEDKEY_ANY	CALG_AGREEDKEY_ANY: (any other key agreement)
17	CALG_KEA_KEYX	CALG_KEA_KEYX: KEA key exchange"},
18	CALG_HUGHES_MD5	CALG_HUGHES_MD5: (Hughes MD5 hashing)
19	CALG_SKIPJACK	CALG_SKIPJACK: Skipjack encryption
	CALG_TEK	CALG_TEK: TEK encryption
20	CALG_CYLINK_MEK	CALG_CYLINK_MEK: (Cylink MEK encryption)
21	CALG_SSL3_SHAMD5	CALG_SSL3_SHAMD5: (for SSL3)
22	CALG_SSL3_MASTER	CALG_SSL3_MASTER: (Master key encryption for SSL3)
23	CALG_SCHANNEL_	
	MASTER_HASH	CALG_SCHANNEL_MASTER_HASH (Master key hashing for Schannel)
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25	CALG_SCHANNEL_	

1	MAC_KEY	CALG_SCHANNEL_MAC_KEY (MAC for Schannel)
2	CALG_SCHANNEL_ ENC_KEY	CALG_SCHANNEL_ENC_KEY
3	CALG_PCT1_MASTER	CALG_PCT1_MASTER (old algorithm, suggest upgrade to newer)
4	CALG_SSL2_MASTER	CALG_SSL2_MASTER (weak algorithm)
5	CALG_TLS1_MASTER	CALG_TLS1_MASTER (strong algorithm)
6	CALG_HMAC	CALG_HMAC: MAC with key
7	CALG_TLS1PRF	CALG_TLS1PRF
8	CALG_HASH_ REPLACE_OWF	CALG_HASH_REPLACE_OWF
9	CALG_SHA_256	CALG_SHA_256 hashing for AES (strong algorithm)
10	CALG_SHA_384	CALG_SHA_384 hashing for AES (strong algorithm)
11	CALG_SHA_512	CALG_SHA_512 hashing for AES (strong algorithm)

Although some preferred implementations of the various methods and apparatuses have been illustrated in the accompanying Drawings and described in the foregoing Detailed Description, it will be understood that the invention is not limited to the exemplary implementations disclosed, but is capable of numerous rearrangements, modifications and substitutions without departing from the spirit of the invention as set forth and defined by the following claims.